

# Female Sterilization: Tubal Ligation

## How can you get a tubal ligation?

A tubal ligation requires a physical exam and counseling by a qualified doctor or health care provider. If the surgery is paid for by federal or state funds, a 30-day waiting period is required. Call your local family planning clinic for information.

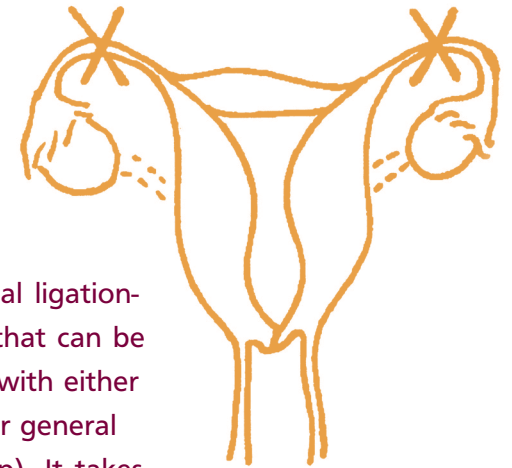
## How a female sterilization works:

Female sterilization is often called “having your tubes tied.” It is a surgical procedure that blocks the fallopian tubes so the egg cannot move down to the uterus and the sperm cannot reach the egg. Sterilization is considered a permanent (*not reversible*) method of birth control and should be chosen only if you are sure that you do not want any more children.

A tubal ligation does not remove any organs; it is not a hysterectomy. After a tubal ligation, you will still produce female hormones and have periods, and there should be no changes in your sexual desire, sexual response or orgasm.

## How the sterilization is done:

The female sterilization-tubal ligation-procedure is an operation that can be done in a clinic or hospital with either a local (woman is awake) or general anesthetic (woman is asleep). It takes about 30 minutes to do the actual surgery. A very small cut is made either beside your belly button or lower on your abdomen. Thin instruments are



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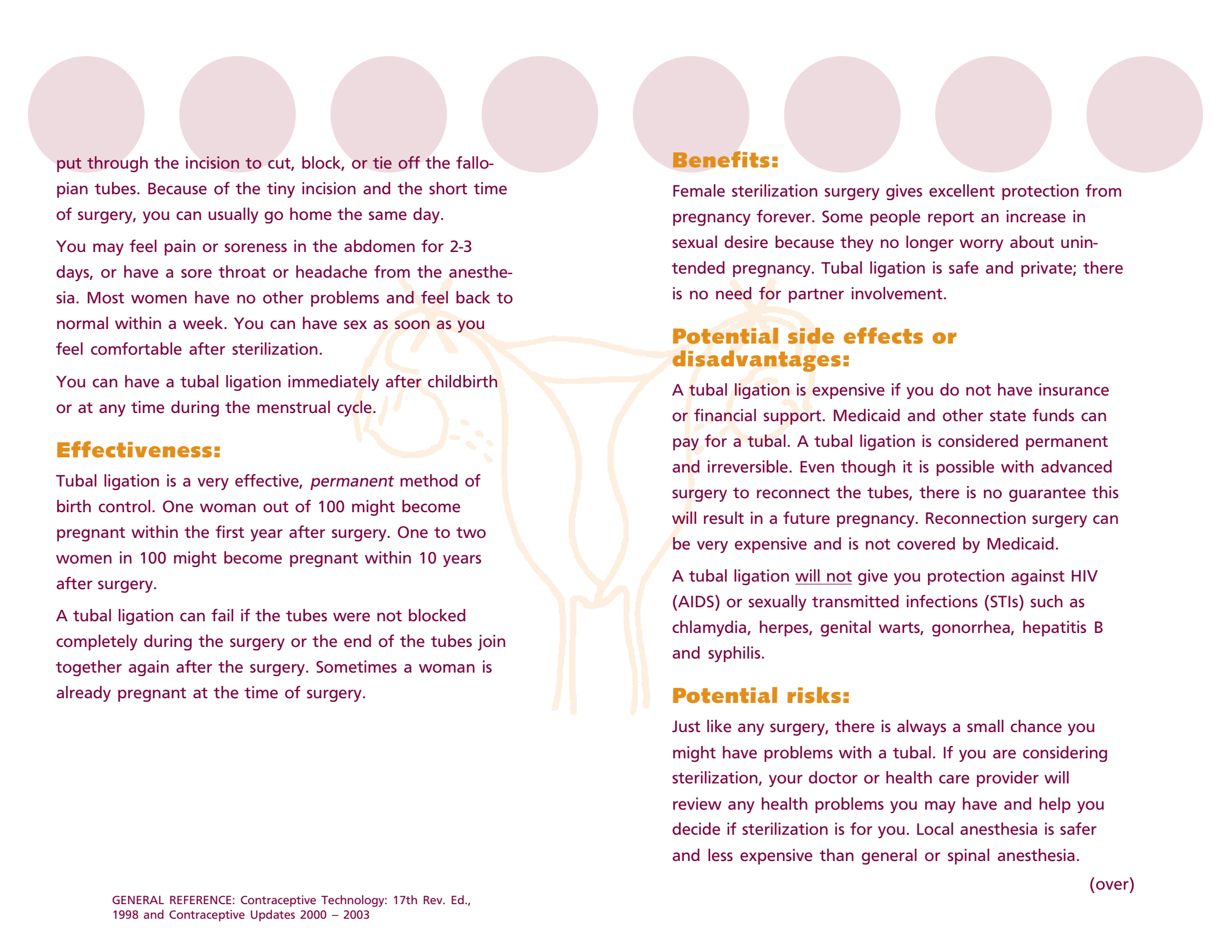
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put through the incision to cut, block, or tie off the fallopian tubes. Because of the tiny incision and the short time of surgery, you can usually go home the same day.

You may feel pain or soreness in the abdomen for 2-3 days, or have a sore throat or headache from the anesthesia. Most women have no other problems and feel back to normal within a week. You can have sex as soon as you feel comfortable after sterilization.

You can have a tubal ligation immediately after childbirth or at any time during the menstrual cycle.

### **Effectiveness:**

Tubal ligation is a very effective, *permanent* method of birth control. One woman out of 100 might become pregnant within the first year after surgery. One to two women in 100 might become pregnant within 10 years after surgery.

A tubal ligation can fail if the tubes were not blocked completely during the surgery or the end of the tubes join together again after the surgery. Sometimes a woman is already pregnant at the time of surgery.

### **Benefits:**

Female sterilization surgery gives excellent protection from pregnancy forever. Some people report an increase in sexual desire because they no longer worry about unintended pregnancy. Tubal ligation is safe and private; there is no need for partner involvement.

### **Potential side effects or disadvantages:**

A tubal ligation is expensive if you do not have insurance or financial support. Medicaid and other state funds can pay for a tubal. A tubal ligation is considered permanent and irreversible. Even though it is possible with advanced surgery to reconnect the tubes, there is no guarantee this will result in a future pregnancy. Reconnection surgery can be very expensive and is not covered by Medicaid.

A tubal ligation will not give you protection against HIV (AIDS) or sexually transmitted infections (STIs) such as chlamydia, herpes, genital warts, gonorrhea, hepatitis B and syphilis.

### **Potential risks:**

Just like any surgery, there is always a small chance you might have problems with a tubal. If you are considering sterilization, your doctor or health care provider will review any health problems you may have and help you decide if sterilization is for you. Local anesthesia is safer and less expensive than general or spinal anesthesia.

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